

## Health Services Impact Committee

Minutes of meeting of Jan. 9, 2007

Present; Dr. Sommers, Dr. Wu; Ms. George; Mr. Grimes, Mr. Hoeflinger

The Committee noted with regret the resignation of Ms. Clement and the announcement by Mr. Grimes that he would also be resigning after the next meeting.

The Committee discussed extension of the Committee's life and the possibility of recruiting new members. The Committee agreed that meeting with Mayor Williams was desirable; Dr. Sommers stated he had had several meetings with the Mayor and that the Mayor had several names he wished to be included in Dynamus' interviews, and that Mr. Leventhal also had one. Mr. Grimes volunteered to continue to keep in touch with George Leventhal and keep the committee informed. He reported Mr. Leventhal agreed that County Executive Leggett's proposed budget cuts would impact health services in our area. Mr. Grimes also said he would contact Dana Byrne to get her opinion.

Dr. Wu reported on the results of her meeting with Karen Hampton, city H.R. Administrator regarding the Committee's inquiry as to whether alternative medicine might be made available to city employees. According to Ms. Hampton, city employees are covered under a union contract with Kaiser and Aetna, with Kaiser closed to new hires; health care costs the city approximately \$600,000/year. There are 140 employees.

Dr. Wu reported that even if changes could not be made to the city's health care contract, it was possible for employees for pay for services through Medicare pretax medical withholding plans. She reported that Ms. Hampton had spoken of an upcoming city health fair in June; Dr. Wu concluded that concepts might be introduced to the public at that venue.

Dr. Wu also reported that Ms. Scarpari had researched census and E.R. utilization statistics and would present her findings to the Committee after returning from her honeymoon.

The Committee spoke briefly on Dynamus and the length of time the Dynamus process was taking, and discussed also whether the Committee's efforts needed to be more focused in light of recent resignations.

Ms. George reported that the RFP had been sent to city attorney Linda Perlman for review but that Ms. Perlman had been out of the office, with Friday being her expected return day. Mr. Grimes reminded the Committee that the city newsletter deadline was next week. Ms. George said she thought the RFP could still be included in the next publication.

The Committee discussed the evaluation process and Mr. Hoeflinger volunteered to design the evaluation criteria. Ms. George promised to send the criteria to the city manager as soon as the Committee decides upon the criteria. Dr. Wu calculated that, giving thirty days' response time, followed by ten to fourteen days for Committee review, that the Committee might be able to make a recommendation on the proposals by its March meeting, with the result that a vendor might be picked by mid-March, followed by tasks and scripts in April and focus groups in May. The Committee agreed that this timetable was feasible.

Mr. Grimes expressed concern as to the Arliss-Flower clinic and the impact of the current county budget condition on healthcare services in the area; he cautioned that the Committee should consider the need for advocacy for healthcare services in that area.

Dr. Sommers agreed, but expressed concern that the Committee get the RFP out before moving on to other projects.

Dr. Wu observed that alternative healthcare is ideal for the Langley Park-Long Beach area, since it is much cheaper than exclusively allopathic medical delivery. She mentioned Portland, Oregon as a model, where separate clinics to deal with homeless youth, addicts, etc. have been established by the city. She reminded the committee that the approach to the city was predicated on using city employees as a model, as has been done in Howard County. She said that if an alternative healthcare program works in an institutional setting, it might be possible to connect alternative healthcare insurance to county insurance in a cost-effective way.

Dr. Sommers asked Dr. Wu to investigate that possibility, and stated he had been told by someone in the University of Maryland Healthcare program that Governor O'Malley wanted to expand the Howard program statewide.

Ms. George noted that Takoma Park is a diverse community and that the city was always open to considering new options.

Mr. Hoeflinger asked the committee to consider the possibility of suggesting a partnership between the city and Washington Adventist Hospital to provide healthcare, or a limited program of healthcare, to the community after the hospital moves. Dr. Sommers thought several funding sources might be available for such an initiative, either in the form of grants or possibly government sponsorship.

Respectfully submitted

Fred Hoeflinger

Co-Chair